

LETTER FROM ROBERT DALE OWEN

Negro Suffrage and Representative Population.

The Three-Fifth Principle in Aggravated Form.

TO THE PRESIDENT.

SIR: From the recollections, now twenty years old, of the years when we were Congressmen together, I derive an abiding faith in your probity, your patriotism and your stern devotion to democratic principles. I have no doubt that you will be true to the people over whom you preside, and that you will be true to the great measure of public policy. I know that it is your habit kindly to receive, if even from private and unofficial sources, such honest suggestions as are of a character involving national harmony and the national safety.

There is an aspect of the negro-suffrage question which has, I think, attracted less attention than it merits, and that is the aspect of right, not the question of expediency, but the question of right.

Permit me, first, to recall to your notice a few facts which are, by reference to the census of 1860 and to the Constitution, can be verified.

The actual population of the States composing the Union, and their representative population, have hitherto differed considerably: the actual population, in 1860, being upward of thirty-one millions (31,149,047), and the representative population about twenty-two millions (22,000,000). The difference between the two is nearly one million six hundred thousand (1,649,047). See Compendium of Census, page 13, p. 132.

The reason of this is apparent. In the year 1860 there were, in round numbers, four millions of slaves (4,000,000) in the States. These slaves were not estimated, but in the representative population, man for man. Five of them were estimated as three; for by the Constitutional provision regulating the basis of representation (Art. I, Sec. 2, ¶ 3), there was to be taken the whole number of free persons and three-fifths of all other persons. Two-fifths of the "other persons" were left out. Two-fifths of four millions is one million six hundred thousand.

About two million four hundred thousand of the slaves are to be regarded as having entered, under the last Census, into the basis of representation. In other words, the white slave-holding population of the South obtained a political advantage the same as that which they would have obtained by actual addition to their population of two million four hundred thousand free persons. As under the last Census the ratio of representation was fixed at one hundred and twenty-seven (127) to one, the South, in virtue of that ratio, had two million four hundred thousand additional free men.

Her total number of representatives being eighty-four, she owed more than one-fifth of that number to her slave property. It follows that if, in a republican government, the number of free persons be the proper basis of representation, she had upward of one-fifth more political influence than her just share.

Each one of her voters possessed a power (so far as the election of the President and of the House of Representatives was concerned) greater by one-fifth than that of each Northern voter.

No man friendly to equal rights, even if (being a white man) he restricts the principle to persons of his own color, will offer a justification of a partition of political power so unfair as this. It was not defended, on principle, by those who assented to it. It was accepted as a necessity, or supposed necessity, in the construction of out of discordant materials, of the American Union.

We of the North have hitherto acted upon it, as men under duress—our hands bound by the Constitution—as it were under protest. We preferred unequal division of power, as regards the two great sections of the Republic, to the chance of anarchy.

That was in the past. Are we, in the future, having got rid of the terrible sacrifice, of the cause of that injustice, still to tolerate the injustice itself, even in aggravated form? Doubtless, now that our hands are free, we have no such intention. Let us make headless we increase and perpetuate this abuse, as men often do, without intention.

Seldom, if ever, has there been imposed on any ruler a task more thickly surrounded with difficulties than that, now before you, of reconstructing in the late insurrectionary States. Uncertain as we are of the sentiments and intentions of men just emerging from a long and painful slumber, and then wait to see what comes of it. It would be premature to lay down any settled plan from which, let events turn as they will, there is to be no departure. We are traversing unknown and treacherous seas, and must take soundings as we go. Nor should we omit the precaution of a sharp look-out for breakers ahead. It seems to me that we may expect such on the course we are pursuing.

The present experiment appears to be, to leave the work of reconstructing Government in the late Rebel South to the loyal whites; or, more accurately stated, to the whites who shall have purged themselves from the crime of treason (actual or implied) so far as an oath, taken from whatever motive, can effect such purgation. Will this experiment, if it proceed unimpeded, result in the permanent extinction of the negro from suffrage?

In proof that it will, it might suffice to remember that these men have grown up in the belief—have been indoctrinated from the cradle in the conviction—that the African is a degraded race. Add that the war has brought the blacks and whites of the South into antagonistic relations, exasperating against the former alike the rich planters, from whose mastery they fled, and the "poor whites," who always hated them, and to whom emancipation (raising despised ones to their level) is a personal affront.

But there is a motive for exclusion in this case stronger than anger, more powerful than hatred—the incentive of self-aggrandizement. They who are made the judges are to be the gainers—initially but vastly the gainers—by their own decision.

Observe the working of this thing. By the Constitution the representative population is to consist of all free persons and three-fifths of all other persons. If, by next Winter, Slavery shall have disappeared, there will be no "other persons" in the South. Her actual population will then coincide with her representative population. She will have gained, as to Federal representation, 1,600,000 persons. She will be entitled, not as now to 64 members, but to 94; and her votes for President will be in proportion: Congress, if it intends that the constitutional rule shall prevail, will have to alter the apportionment so as to correspond to the new order of things.

Now, if the negro is admitted to vote, the Constitutional rule will operate justly. For then each voter in the South will have precisely the same political influence as a voter in the North. The unjust three-fifths principle will have disappeared forever.

In the other hand, if color be deemed cause of exclusion, then all the political power which is withheld from the emancipated slave is gained by the Southern white.

For though, by law, we may deny suffrage to the freedman, we cannot prevent his being reckoned among those free persons who constitute the basis of representation. His presence, whether disfranchised or not, adds, in spite of all we can do, to the political influence of the State, for it increases the number of its votes for President and the number of its representatives in Congress. Now, somebody must gain by this. The gain is made equally by every actual voter in the State. If,

in any State, the number of blacks and whites is equal, and if, in that State, blacks are excluded from voting, then every white voter will go to the polls armed with twice the political power enjoyed by a white voter in any Northern State. But again, this is on the supposition that every white adult in the State is loyal, and therefore entitled to vote.

Are the half of all Southern male adults at this time, or will they be for years to come, more than bipartite if even that? I think you will not say that they are. It would surely be an extravagant calculation. If more than half the whites in ex-insurrectionary States shall actually qualify themselves as voters, will you not find yourself compelled to administer the Government, in the late secession portion of the Union, through the agency of its enemies? One-third would be a full estimate, in my judgment, for the true loyal.

But let us assume the two-thirds of all the white male adults of the South become voters, and that they exclude from suffrage, by law or by Constitutional provision, all persons of color, what would be the political consequences under such a state of things? If (as we may roughly estimate), by destruction through war and by depopulation of population through emigration to Mexico, Europe and elsewhere, the number of whites throughout the late Rebel States shall have been reduced until blacks and whites exist there in nearly equal numbers, then, in the case above supposed, each voter in these States, when he approached the ballot box during a Congressional or Presidential election, would do so with a political power as much potent as that of a free person in a Northern State. This vast advantage, once gained by Southern whites, is it likely that they will ever relinquish it?

Nor, if we disfranchise the negro, is there any escape from some such consummation, except by rooting out from the Constitution the principle that the whole number of free persons shall be the basis of representation. But that principle lies at the base of all free government. We also root out republicanism itself when we discard it.

Thus it appears that the present experiment in reconstruction, if suffered to run its course, and if interpreted as I think we have just come to fear that it will be, tends (naturally, it may be said) to bring about two results:

First: To cause the disfranchisement of the freedman. Whether we effect this directly, as by provision of law or by a disqualifying clause in a proclamation, or whether we do it by leaving the decision to his former masters and his old enemies, matters nothing except in form and in words; the result is brought about with equal certainty in either way. Passion, prejudice and self-interest conspire to produce this result.

Second: It establishes—not the odious three-fifths clause, but even merely a fourth clause—something much worse than either. It permits the investment of the Southern white with a preponderance of political power, such as no class of men, in a democratic Republic, ever enjoyed since the world began.

I do not believe me in this, Mr. President—overlook or underestimate the grave embarrassments that beset your path, turn as you will. I call to mind the overbearing influence of passion and prejudice, and I admit that when these prevail, in exaggerated form, throughout a large portion of any nation, a wise ruler recognizes the fact of their existence and regulates his acts accordingly.

But the sway of passion and prejudice, despotic for a season, has but a limited term of endurance, and will be treated as an evanescent thing. It is too transient and untrustworthy a basis for a comprehensive system of policy. Tenderly it should be treated, but not tenderly repeated or weakly obeyed.

Money, God-like attribute as it is, may run riot. It is very wild, by not of grace, to restore to penitent Southern sinners their legally forfeited rights; let us be friends and fellow-citizens once more, as Christianity and equity require. But to suffer each of these returning Rebels, when about to cast his vote for President or for Representatives of the people, to be clothed with three-fifths as much power as is possessed by a Northern voter exercising a similar right, is, very surely, a somewhat superfluous stretch of liberality.

And what manner of men, I pray you, are those whom we propose that, to select from among their fellows—granting them political powers unknown to democracy, investing them with privileges of an oligarchical character? It is ungenerous to speak harshly of a vanquished foe, especially of one who has shown courage and constancy worthy of the noblest soldier; but the truth is the truth, and is ever fully spoken. They are men whose terrible misfortune it has been to be born and bred under a system the most cruel and demoralizing the world ever saw. The wisest of those who have been subjected to such a surrounding have confessed its evil power. "There must doubtless," said Jefferson in his Notes on Virginia, "be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people, produced by the existence of Slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions—the most unremitting despotism on one part, and degrading submission on the other." "The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and his morals under such circumstances." ("Notes," p. 270.)

These are the habitual results of the system. To what incredible excesses its occasional outbreaks may lead we have irrefragable evidence daily coming before us, of schemes of wholesale incendiarism, involving deaths by the thousands of women and children; schemes to poison, by the malignant virus of the yellow fever, an entire community; deliberate plans to destroy prisoners of war by insufferable hardships and slow suffering; plots, too successful, almost to shroud a nation in mourning by assassination.

Many honorable exceptions no doubt there are, in whom natural virtue resists daily temptation. Such exceptions are to be found in all communities, no matter how perverted the surroundings. But in deciding National questions we must be governed by the rule, not by the exceptions.

The Southern whites subscribe into three classes: The slaveholders proper, many of whom are excluded from pardon by the Proclamation of Amnesty; the "poor whites," and what may be called the women of the South—of which last our country feels the loss; and the worthy President is a noble type, and of which we may regard stout-hearted Parson Brownlow as a clerical example.

If this last class, whom here have come the sturdiest Union men in Secessiondom, constituted, like the mechanic of New England or the farmer of the West, a large proportion of the population, we might hope that it would leaven and redeem the extremes of society around it. But it is found sparse and in inconceivable numbers, except, perhaps, in Eastern Tennessee and the northern portion of North Carolina. The poor whites, of whom the clay-eating planter of Georgia and other Gulf States is the type, far outnumber them. Of this last class Mrs. Fanny Kemble, in that wonderful book of hers, "Journal of a Residence on a Southern Plantation," gives, from personal observation, a graphic description: "They are, I suppose," she says, "the most degraded race of human beings existing on the earth—dirty, lazy, ignorant, brutal, proud, peevish, savage, without one of the nobler attributes that have been found occasionally allied to the uses of savage nature. They own no slaves, for they are, almost without exception, property poor; they will not work, for that, as they conceive, would reduce them to an equality with the abhorred negroes; they squab and steal and stare on the outskirts of the lowest of all civilized societies, and their countenances bear witness to the squalor of their condition and the utter degradation of their natures." (Journal, p. 146.)

I have often encountered this class. I saw many of them last year while visiting, as member of a Government commission, some of the Southern States. Labor degraded before their eyes has extinguished within them all respect for industry, all ambition, all honorable exertion, to improve their condition. When last I had the pleasure of seeing you at Nashville, I met there, in the office of a gentleman charged with the duty of leasing transportation and railroads to indentured persons, black and white, a notable example of this strange class. He was a Rebel deserter; a rough, dirty, snout specimen of humanity—jelly, stout and warty-jock

ing, rude and abrupt in speech and bearing, and clothed in tattered homespun. In no civil tone he demanded rations. When informed that all rations applicable to such a purpose were exhausted, he broke forth: "What am I to do then? How am I to get home?"

"You can have no difficulty," was the reply. "It is but fifteen or eighteen hours down the river" (the Cumberland), "by steamboat to where you live. I furnished you transportation; you can work your way."

"Work my way" (with a scowl of angry contempt). "I never did a stroke of work since I was born, and I never expect to, till my dying day."

The agent replied quietly: "They will give you all you want to eat on board, if you help them to food."

"Curry words!" he retorted with an oath. "Whenever they ask me to carry wood, I'll tell them they may get me on shore; I'd rather starve for a week than work for an hour; I don't want to live in a world that I can't make alive out of without work."

It is for men like that, ignorant, illiterate, vicious—fit for no decent employment on earth except manual labor, and spinning off labor as degradation—is it in favor of such insolent swaggers that we are to disfranchise the humble, quiet, hard-working negro? Are the votes of three such men as Stanton or Seward, Sumner or Garrison, Grant or Sherman, to be neutralized by the ballot of one such worthless barbarian?

Are there not breakers ahead? To such an issue as that may not the late tentatives at reconstruction, how faithfully conceived and intended for good, practically tend?

The duty of the United States to guarantee to every State in the Union a republican form of government is as sacred as the duty to protect each of them from invasion. In that duty fully fulfilled, when, with the power of prevention in our own hands, we suffer the white voter in the late Rebel, the least intelligent and the least industrious section of our country to usurp a measure of political power three-fold greater than in the rest of the nation, a voter enjoys?

Will it be denied that we have the legal power in our own hands?

Unsuccessful Rebels cannot, by bits of paper called Secession ordinances, take a State out of the Union, but, by leaving civil war, they can convert all the inhabitants of a State into public enemies, deprived, as such, by law, of their political rights. The United States can restore these rights—can pardon these public enemies. And we have the right to pardon on conditions; as, for example, on the condition that Slavery shall cease to exist, or on the condition that none of those persons, who form the basis of representation, shall, because of color, be deprived of the right of suffrage.

If we neglect to impose the first condition, the cause of the late Rebellion will continue, and will, some day, produce another. If we neglect to impose the second condition, an oligarchy, on an extended scale, will grow up in one large section of the country, working grave injustice toward the voters of another section. The three-fifths abuse will reappear in a giant form.

But if we under this, it cannot fail to produce, as Slavery produced, alienations and heart-burnings. Under any plan of reconstruction involving so broad an injustice it is vain to expect harmony or permanent peace between the Northern and Southern sections of the Union.

It is not here denied, nor is it desirable, that, under ordinary circumstances, a State may, by a general law applicable to all, restrict the right of suffrage; as, for example, to those who pay taxes, or to those who can read and write. And it is quite true that the effect of such a law would be to give additional political power to those who still enjoyed the elective franchise.

But a State can only do this after she has a State Government in operation, not when she is about to form one. North Carolina is in the Union, as she has always been, but her people, having lost, by war, against the Government, their political rights, are not allowed to go on under their old Constitution and laws. They have to begin again. As Idaho, if desiring to be a State, would have to do, the people of North Carolina have to elect members of a Convention, which Convention has to frame a State Constitution, to be presented, for acceptance or rejection, to Congress. Now, just as Idaho, taking her first step toward State sovereignty, could not, on her own authority, begin by denying a vote in the election of members of her Convention, to half her free population, or if she did, would find her Constitution rejected, for that cause, by Congress, so not emanating from the whole people, so, in my judgment, ought not North Carolina, having forfeited her State rights and beginning anew as a Territory does, to be permitted, in advance, to reject more than a third of her free population—95,000 out of 292,000. I hope she will not so construe her rights as to venture on such a rejection. If she does, Congress ought to reject her Constitution as authorized by a part of her people only.

But, beyond all this, we cannot safely allow the negro exemption clause to take its chance along with other possible restrictions to suffrage, which a State, fully organized, may see fit to enact. For, because of its magnitude, it is an act of ostracism by one-half the free inhabitants of an entire section of country against the other half equally free.

Secondly, because of its character and results. It is an act of injustice against those who have assisted the life of the nation against those who have defended the national life; an act by which we abandon to the tender mercies of the doubtfully loyal and the disguised traitor those whose loyalty has stood every test, unshaken, unshaken, unshaken and simple indeed, but whose race identity never failed either the Union fugitive host in the forest, or the Union cause imperiled on the battle field.

The decision of a matter so grave as this should be taken out of the category of those rights which a State, at her option, may grant or may withhold; because, being national in its consequences, it is national in its character. This is a matter for Federal intervention, because, like emancipation, it is a matter involving the Federal safety.

It is because I know the frankness of your own character, Mr. President, that, at possible risk of conflicting opinions, I write to you thus frankly. It is because I am deeply impressed by the vast importance of the issues at stake that I write to you at all.

I think of our Union soldiers, the survivors of a thousand battles. I recall the last day, not of conflict but of triumph, when Confederate arms were stacked and Confederate paroles were given, and the Stars and Bars fell before the old flag. I remember with what fierce fury those who surrendered at last, fought, throughout a four years' desperate effort to shatter into fragments that benighted Government under which, for three quarters of a century, they had enjoyed prosperity and protection. I remember all that was done and suffered and sacrificed, before, through countless discouragements and reverses, treason's plot was trampled down and the glorious ending was reached. And as, in April, I follow victory and vanquished from the scene of conflict, I think that never was nation more gratefully or more fully assailed, and that never did nation owe to her deliverers from anarchy and dismemberment a deeper debt of gratitude and good will.

Then I ask myself a great question. Shall these soldiers of liberty, returning from fields of death to Northern fields of labor and of peaceful contentment of content in the belief that the only weapon, and the bulwark of defeat or of victory is contained in the election—shall these veterans, who never flinched before military force, be overcome by their laurels and green by political stratagem? Their weapons of war laid aside, is the reward of these conquerors to be that, man to man, they shall be entitled to one-third as much influence in administering their country's Government as the opponents they conquered? Are the victors on fields of death to become the vanquished in halls of legislation?

It is a question which the nation cannot fail, one long, to ask itself, and who can doubt what the ultimate answer will be?

God, who, throughout the great crisis of our nation's history, overruled evil for good, has caused the wrath of man to work out His own gracious ends—directing us, without our will or agency, in paths of justice and of victory which our human wisdom was too feeble to discover—direct you also, throughout the arduous task before you, to the just and the right!

ROBERT DALE OWEN.

New-York, June 21, 1865.

OUR EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM PARIS.

The Debate on the Budget—Max and Mexico—French Policy toward the Vanquished and French Appreciation of Liberty toward Rebels—Comte Montalembert and his Pamphlet—The Corps Legislatif Again—A Correction—Personal—De Morny's Picture.

From Our Own Correspondent.

PARIS, June 9, 1865.

The debate on the Budgets this week has turned attention to the Corps Legislatif again; I say Budgets, in the plural, for what with the "ordinary," "extraordinary," "rectificatory" and other devices, the singularly incomprehensible Budget becomes fivefold difficult of comprehension.

Monsieur Thiers declared at the outset of his speech, the other day, that it had taken him, a man patient of labor and practiced in such studies, three months to understand it; and he then went on for hours with an anatomical dissection and severe analysis of it, which was reading if only as a triumph of rhetoric. The triumph is that it is interesting reading; there is no more striking chapter in his historical writings. By his wonderful, yet apt, imagery of thousands and millions bristling throughout, with outlying wit and relief the long march of his close-veiled argument. His conclusion is that the finances, as at present administered, are in a wretched way that is leading to destruction, and that the only means of bettering them is by retrenchment. The only possible retrenchments are to be made by withdrawing from Mexico, and by limiting the excessive expenditures which Government proposes for internal public works. This led him to a searching critique of the Mexican policy and of Morny's finances. The government orator replied, asserting that French finances were in a deplorable condition, that the proposed equilibrium of income and outgo for 1865 would be equivalent to this time—though all the other years that it has been promised for the last many years, time has come round which has kicked the scale in the wrong direction. Either orator seems to make a good case if you listen to him alone. If you listen to both, or even if you, though only as an outsider, meditate either thoughtfully, you arrive through a good deal of confusion about the figures, to the conviction that the financial policy of the Government is a rather remarkable degree of a policy of expedients—of hand-to-hand and expectation—like its policy in regard to Mexico.

This last was subjected yesterday to a searching review by Jules Favre. He began with the outset of the expedition four years ago, and pointed out the vacillations, the inconsistencies, the glaring self-contradictions of which the Government has been guilty on the official documents. He analyzed the last Mexican loan, showing that by its conditions Morny had received 100 of the 200 millions he thereby promised to pay, and asked if that was proof of the prosperity of the Empire? "No," he said, "it was a Government Commission, a committee for saying it—'by five and a half of the seven millions of my subjects.' The whole outlay one and a half million still owes, and is indefinitely to occupy the busy attention of 28,000 French troops, 600 more than it was officially decreed four years ago would need ever to be sent to that country—just 28,000 more than would be there at this time, as was officially declared in months ago, but only 6,000 less than the large French force that has ever been kept there. He closed with an allusion to the only new feature introduced on the face of Mexican things by the close of the civil war in the United States.

The Government Commissioner replied as best he could, but having to deal mostly with facts, and not with Favre, he turned off sideways with rhetorical talk about "honor" and the "flag," and the appropriation of Frenchmen questioning either, under any circumstances, when it was pronounced the French variety; but in reference to Favre's allusion to the United States, the Government Commissioner grew highly eloquent, quoted entire with great volition the closing paragraph of President Lincoln's last inaugural, highly finding it and its author, taking this rather late opportunity to declare that he admired it deeply at the time it was published, and expressing, in a rather patronizing way, the hope that its wise sentiment of mercy would inspire the policy of our Government toward the vanquished. And there the speaker was much applauded.

This kind of talk from this kind of folk is, doubtless, subject to suspicion. For there are they who have always maintained against all comers the righteousness of that sweeping policy of proscription that followed the coup d'etat, by which ten thousand men, who had not rebelled against any government, who had shed no citizen's blood, were ordered over the frontiers, were interned in hopeless places in Algeria, were deported to Cayenne, in prison ships, were shut up in prison in France, without trial—without form of trial. There are they who, on the morrow of the Emperor's recent being assassinated, were swift to pass the so-called Law of Public Safety, which was literally the calvary of an indefinite, unnamed number of French citizens, putting their personal liberty and their very lives at the unceremonious disposal of the Administration. I say this, I say this, because the law empowers the Administration to take any French person from his bed at midnight, and, without granting form of trial of any sort, or giving reasons to any one, send him straightway to Cayenne. And this crime has been done on men whose only conceivable crime has been "bad political antecedents."

But now we are to remember that if the devil preach morality, it is none the less morality, and some of us are to remember, too, how loudly and earnestly we have protested these past fifteen years against the violence exercised by the Napoleonic régime on its political enemies. Some of us even went so far as to protest against His Majesty's sequestration of all and condemnation of one-half of the Orleans's estates.

What is more to the point, that at our constant sympathies in France for the past four years—sympathies of our cause, their cause, the common cause of humanity and its progressive liberty—do we with equal earnestness, though immeasurably better grace, prevail and pray that our policy of pacification may have for its motto that noble text of our Liberty's martyred apostle which begins: "With malice toward none—with charity for all." It is only our most virulent enemies who are hoping that the intense excitement naturally aroused by the murder of Lincoln may degenerate into a passion of cold hate, of ill-humors, of impotent vengeance, to be wreaked on the corpse of one or more of the leaders of the Rebellion. By confining them to the land, the blood they have caused to be shed cries out against us, and we shall bitterly disappoint again some day here and in England, the only solace to whose bitter disappointment at the victory of the Union is the hope that in a fit of passion we shall do something of the kind.

Of all that has been lately said or written in France, of good and wise and eloquent on our war and its result, the fresh published oration of Comte Montalembert, entitled *La Victoire du Nord aux Etats-Unis*, is chief among the best, the wisest and most eloquent. I say oration: the pamphlet with the above title, which for the past week is in all the bookshop windows, first appeared a week or two earlier as an article in *Le Correspondant*—the special organ of the Liberal French Catholics, and hence its speciality the second if not first in literary merit of all French periodicals. But Montalembert, whether at the tribune, whence he now is jealously excluded under this régime, or in a newspaper article, an occasional pamphlet or article, or a two-volume octavo work, is always and eminently an orator; and never has his argument been borne up and on by eloquence of a loftier flight than that which characterizes the admirable article in question. It is likely to do much good here with a certain class of good Catholics whose ignorance of the causes and meaning of the war has been thickened, and whose prejudice toward us has been cunningly played upon by our enemies here—and both defects, in a sort, encouraged—to say the least of it—by the permissive inaction of American Roman Catholics. Their shortcoming in this regard is, as an ardent Catholic admits with se-

row: "If, with the exception of the learned and eloquent Dr. Brownson, we find among the Catholics of the United States no champion of Abolition, we have at least the poor consolation of being able to assert that no apology for Slavery has issued from their ranks." Whether this proposition is unexceptionably accurate, you may say. But Protestantism may keep in mind, to its healthy humiliation, that its churches, in and out of our United States, have sustained ministers who were the most fervent apostles of Gospel Slavery.

Montalembert's pamphlet is vigorously nourished with his knowledge of the facts of our war—of its causes and of the manner of its conduct. It is by no means flattering to our vanity in all its pages. He writes as a philosophical historian and as a French politician as well as in his character of a sincere friend of the United States. I began to speak of his work for the sake of noting that he, in common with every one of the statesmen and thoughtful men of all branches of liberalism here, anxious in the interest of a common cause, that we should come out well from the last stages of trial of our national cause, quotes with admiration the closing paragraph of what we may call Lincoln's testament—a bequest of charity and polite forgiveness of the past. "God grant that in the first joy of victory the Republican majority may show itself as generous as it has been resolute."

To do anything like justice to the various excellences of this writing, to derive from it all that is profitable therein for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; to appreciate with due enjoyment its high literary merits and to be inspired by its large, generous tone of thought and feeling, you must read it entire. Why not have some capable one translate it with you?

To return to the Corps Legislatif. It is quite noteworthy that last Wednesday a session of the Budget that appropriates six millions for a new post-office was rejected by a large majority. This is the first time that this body, which theoretically has a certain control over the Budget, has ever flatly voted down any Government proposition for expenditure.

To-day the *Monteur* publishes a decree of the Emperor recent, by virtue of which all warnings (*decretions*) hitherto given to any French newspaper, or other periodicals, are declared to be null and as if they had not been. This is the first time since 1852 that any such amnesty has been proclaimed to the suffering press, except on some great festive occasion.

Even this French political world does more than that! The Emperor is said not to be all serene over the receipt of reports of how things are going on during his absence—the Legislative body being a little slow, Prince Napoleon a little fast. Still he prolongs his absence and persists in keeping his health under that hot Algerian sun—most probably political advisers both to the constant talk of the seething discontent of subjects only waiting the master's absence to boil over in fury, and to the yet hotter constant talk of the past twelve years that his body is a mere bundle of specially fatal disease. The last little family quarrel between him and Orléans Jerome is reported to be in the way of making up, like the half dozen previous squabbles between them; the Prince, so says Morny, will go to welcome his landing at Toulon, where now he is not expected before the middle or end of next week.

The *Monteur* of to-day publishes in full the freshly received dispatch from Washington 22d May, addressed to Mr. Bigelow, with an order to furnish a copy of the *Proclamation de Lévy*, by Secretary of State Seward, which acknowledges courteously the receipt of the French Government's expression of condolence on the occasion of President Lincoln's death. It is very rare that the publication of diplomatic notes so promptly follows the receipt. This one will be consolatory reading for Mexican bondholders.

The French Government, going along with the English Government as usual (since it could not succeed in its three attempts to urge H. R. M.'s Government to go faster against us), has reconsidered its declaration of H. R. M.'s belligerent right. Whereupon the editor of *Le Paris*, who keeps coming up jollier and jollier, asserts a joyful confidence that the Union is all both and impossibility all the same.

Will you let me correct a little error that has walked, with various effrontery into one of your late published columns of literary items, all about "the considerable improvement occasioned in French literary circles by publication in Paris of a book entitled 'The History of Napoleon III. by Jules Casimir.' No steps have yet been taken for its suppression, and it is having a large circulation." You really think so?

The squib has never got further toward publication than the title, which was issued here as a joke two or three months ago. The idea of anything in shape of a book with contents such as that title indicates, would not be stepped on by the police at double-quick. Not that it might not have a considerable circulation in Paris all the same. A person told me the other day that he could not have, if I wanted, a thousand copies of the Belgian edition of the *Progres de Libanion*. "How do you manage them in?" "The *donateurs* (custom-house officers) bring them through for us. *Progres de Libanion*, *La Chaux-de-Fonds*, anything we want. It is cheaper to bribe them than to do it ourselves, and there is no risk."

The Imperial agent of the first volume of the *Apology for Jules Casimir* and self has received from the King of Portugal collar and grand cordon of the Order of Scientific and Artistic Merit for such proof of his literary attainments.

Lieut. Maury—ex-United States Lieut. Maury of the Washington Observatory—is old and very poor and in deep C. S. A. dolences in England, where a subscription has been started in aid of his material necessities, in which French and other continental scientific folks are taking part.

Gen. Melissart, ex-Yours Napoleon, and late Gen. Melissart, as Disbury will style him, arrived with his family on Friday last at Milan.

The sum realized at the De Morny picture sale amounted to a little over 1,700,000 francs. The sale of the celebrated Van Buren gallery—about 40 pictures of the old Dutch and Flemish schools—brought here for sale two months or so ago, realized over 1,800,000 francs. The *Portrait Gallery*, including statuary, curiosities, &c., brought nearly 4,000,000 francs, three and four months ago.

Tenth Annual Commencement of the Charlier French Institute.

The Tenth Annual commencement of the Charlier French Institute was celebrated last evening at the rooms of the Institute in the presence of a large number of ladies and gentlemen, the parents, relatives and friends of its pupils. The rooms, in which the exercises took place, were beautifully decorated. The national colors were tastefully hoisted up along the walls. The bust of Abraham Lincoln, crowned with a wreath of flowers, between the busts of Washington on the right and Lafayette on the left, occupied a prominent position in the hall.

The Rev. Dr. Howard Crosby presided. The exercises commenced with the singing of a class song by the pupils, in which they aptly made up for harmony and sweetness by earnestness and sound. They certainly delighted themselves, if they did not succeed in their efforts to please an indulgent audience.

Professor Charlier then addressed the pupils on the happy relations which existed between him and them during the past year, and expressed a hope that they would continue in the future long after they passed from under his control and guidance. He gave some practical hints on education which many of the parents present would do well to remember and put into execution.

Three of the old pupils of the Institute, in grateful appreciation of Mr. Charlier's kindness to them under his care, went annually to present him with a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Some time since one died, but by the two survivors the pious and touching donation is perpetuated. The school continues about two hundred boys. Dr. Crosby also made some remarks.

The occasion was a very happy one, and all present